



children's museum of central oregon



IMPACTING COMMUNITY NEEDS



The Children’s Museum of Central Oregon (CMCO) is dedicated to inspiring curiosity and lifelong learning through hands-on experiences in science, technology, engineering, art, and math (STEAM). Since 2015, CMCO has served families across the region through a mobile museum model—bringing interactive exhibits and programs directly to schools, libraries, and public events.

While our mobile museum has reached thousands of children, the growing demand for high-quality, hands-on educational experiences far exceeds what our mobile programming can provide. Central Oregon’s rapid population growth, coupled with a lack of robust early childhood education infrastructure, underscores the urgent need to scale our operations and establish a permanent children’s museum. A dedicated space will allow us to meet the needs of more families, offer deeper and more consistent programming, and provide equitable access to STEAM learning opportunities for all children in the region.

Challenge

Central Oregon is the only region in the state without a children’s museum, leaving a critical gap in early learning opportunities—especially in STEAM. This gap is reflected in local student performance: only 32.6% of Bend–La Pine students met science proficiency standards in 2023–2024—a 10% drop from pre-pandemic levels. Redmond and Sisters report similarly concerning scores, with Sisters facing a 16% decline. Math results show the same troubling trend. Research shows that 95% of science learning happens outside the classroom, yet Central Oregon lacks a dedicated space for children and their caregivers to explore, experiment, and learn through play.

Solution

A permanent STEAM-based children’s museum will fill this gap, offering interactive exhibits reflective of the unique Central Oregon environment, hands-on programs, and community partnerships that ignite curiosity and build essential skills.

CMCO’s future facility will provide consistent, equitable access to high-quality learning experiences—helping close achievement gaps, strengthen academic outcomes, and inspire the next generation of problem-solvers, creators, and critical thinkers. CMCO will augment this approach with the mobile museum outreach to schools. In partnership with schools and families, our vision is to achieve 50% student proficiency in science and math by 2035. The need is real and the time is now!



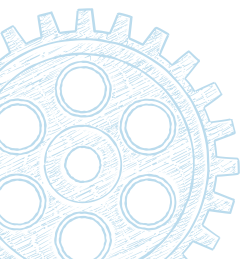
KEY PROJECT ELEMENTS

The Children's Museum of Central Oregon will be a transformative space where children and families explore, play, and learn together. Designed to strengthen early childhood education and support the region's growing population, the museum will offer world-class, hands-on STEAM experiences.

Through immersive exhibits and interactive learning, CMCO will spark curiosity, foster creativity, and inspire the next generation of thinkers, builders, creators, and innovators.

The core elements of the project include:

- **2.5 ACRE** site with ample parking and accessibility
- **25K SF** building with indoor and outdoor exhibits
- **6 PERMANENT**, place-based exhibits focused on **geology, water, nature, gross motor development, early childhood, and climate**
- **SCIENCE LAB AND MAKER SPACE** to support STEAM-based programs and experiences
- **EDUCATIONAL CLASSROOMS** for additional programs and out of school time camps



EDUCATION AND ECONOMIC ENGINE

CMCO has intentionally selected a site on US 97 in north Bend for the permanent museum. This is a location that supports access for both urban and rural families, including those from Warm Springs, Madras, Prineville, Redmond, Sisters, Sunriver and La Pine.

Play is serious learning and serious business. While CMCO's core mission is to support the educational outcomes of our community, the museum will also generate a powerful ripple effect across the regional economy. As a new and unique family-focused destination, CMCO will also strengthen Central Oregon's tourism sector, which continues to lag behind pre-pandemic levels, and contribute to long-term economic growth.

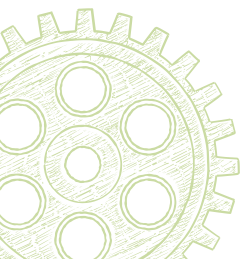


15,000

**MARGINALIZED CHILDREN
SERVED ANNUALLY**

\$50MM

**ECONOMIC IMPACT
OVER 10 YEARS**



PROJECT SOURCES AND USES

Sources

| | Projected Amount |
|------------------------------------|---------------------|
| Individual/Corporate | \$10,000,000 |
| Foundations | \$11,000,000 |
| Public - Municipal, State, Federal | \$5,000,000 |
| Total | \$26,000,000 |

Uses

| | Projected Amount |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------|
| Architects, Design, and Engineers | \$1,800,000 |
| Land | \$3,700,000 |
| Construction | \$6,300,000 |
| Exhibit Development and Fabrication | \$10,000,000 |
| Project Administration | \$550,000 |
| Startup Operations and Financing | \$1,650,000 |
| Contingency | \$2,000,000 |
| Total | \$26,000,000 |



FUNDING REQUEST



CMCO respectfully requests support from the Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Capital Construction for the request of \$2,500,000 in funding through Senate Bill 5531. Together, we have the opportunity to propel Central Oregon children to be the next generation of thinkers, builders, creators, and innovators through foundational educational opportunities and a dedicated community space.

We are extremely grateful for the opportunity to present this request. Our team would be pleased to answer any questions, provide additional information, or discuss how this partnership can shape the future of learning in Central Oregon. Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration.

